

**TESTIMONY OF PETER R. CORDEAU SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 15, 2017**

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Committee, I am Chief Executive Officer at Sharon Hospital. Sharon Hospital collaborates with Northwestern AHEC on a number of important initiatives including the Rural Recruitment Immersion Program for Interdisciplinary Health Profession Students. The rural recruitment immersion program exposes medical, dental and physician assistant students to the unique aspects of practice in a rural setting. Students rotate among clinical providers including a hospital, community health center, skilled nursing facility, addiction treatment facility and local health practitioner offices to experience first-hand the unique contribution rural practitioners make to rural communities. The goal of the program is to recruit health practitioners to Connecticut's rural areas.

NWCTAHEC's programs and services are invaluable to maintaining access to health care for Connecticut's most vulnerable citizens. Maintaining state funding for NWCTAHEC is necessary to preserve its ability to implement myriad programs including the Health Profession Student Interdisciplinary Rural Immersion Program, Mental Health First Aid, Youth and Collegiate Health Service Corps, Primary Care Workforce Recruitment and Community Health Workers as well as maintain its capacity to respond to emerging community health care needs. In addition, it is important to note that NWCTAHEC successfully leverages state funding to attract federal and private funds to increase its capacity to implement community based programs.

<http://health360.org/home.html>

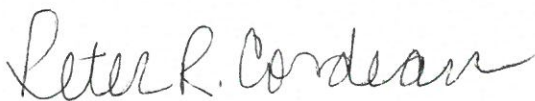
The 4 regional CT AHEC Centers, in collaboration with the CT AHEC Program Office, extend UConn Health's reach state-wide. Funded since 1997, the CT AHEC Network provides state-wide services to more than 10,000 residents, annually (<http://www.publichealth.uconn.edu/ct-ahec.html>). The CT AHEC Network responds to local community health needs which include oral health, mental health, youth and adult mental health first aid, health literacy, homeless and migrant farm worker access to health care. As the demographics of the state continue to change, the primary care workforce must expand and respond to meet those changes: the CT AHEC Network is an invaluable resources to address these challenges.

NWCTAHEC and the entire CT AHEC Network utilizes federal, state and private funds to support:

- Inter-professional education and community based training programs for health professions students with a focus on rural and urban under served.
- Promotion and retention of primary care providers in collaboration with state agencies
- Mental health training for community members, health profession students and health professionals.
- Cultural competence and medical interpreting training to health professionals and trainees
- Continuing medical education programs for public health and health care professionals
- Leadership for the State Innovation Model Community Health Workforce Development & Integration to develop the Community Health Worker workforce in Connecticut. (<http://www.healthreform.ct.gov/ohri/site/default.asp>)
- Pipeline educational programs to raise awareness of health careers for pre-health professions learners including the Health Occupations and Technology Careers in Connecticut (HOT Guide) which provides residents with an invaluable resource to learn about health and biotechnology careers in the state (www.healthcareersinct.com).

NWCTAHEC program high school, college and health professions students participate in volunteer and service learning activities that directly benefit the communities they serve. Since 2012, CT AHEC Network students have provided 200,000 hours of service with a total monetary value of \$4,053,262.

It is my opinion that it would be detrimental to vulnerable communities across Connecticut if NWCTAHEC and the entire CT AHEC Network is not supported with state funding. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. Below is my contact information for your convenience.



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